



Benedictine Connection

Published for their friends by the Sisters of St. Benedict
St. Benedict's Monastery, Winnipeg, Manitoba Canada

Spring, 2007
Volume 15, No. 1

95th Anniversary



Message from the Prioress

- Sr. Irene Burzynski, OSB



Dear Friends,

Greetings to each and everyone of you during this wonderful Easter Season. As I consider the upcoming weeks

and months, I want to highlight two events that will be taking place at St. Benedict's Monastery.

The first event will be the official blessing of St. Benedict's Place in June. St. Benedict's Place is a 20 suite complex for independent living. We have some wonderful residents living at SBP already and we do have space for more to move in.

The second event is the 95th Anniversary of our foundation. On August 19th, we, the Sisters of St. Benedict, will have ministered in school, hospitals, personal care homes, parishes and in the area of spirituality for 95 years. The length of years, the number of people who

have touched us and whom we have touched is commendable. We are grateful for the opportunity to have been able to be connected with so many of you.

However, the focal point that has sustained us in our various works is our communal and personal prayer. Our founder Benedict calls our community prayer the Work of God. The Scripture, the Word of God, in particular the psalms are central, indispensable and the cornerstone in our life as Benedictines. Our communal prayer is the sustaining force in our lives and in our ministry. Every morning the sisters come into chapel in silence. We begin each day with song, psalms, scripture reading and with times for quiet. We praise God and ask for God's protection and help for all those in need. Three times a day, morning, noon and evening we gather together to do the Work of God. We stop whatever we are doing, go into chapel and let the words of the psalms wash over

us and soak into our bones. These three prayer times form the hinges of our day and the heart of our life together. The psalms express every human emotion, need, longing and situation.

One of my favorites is psalm 62.

**“My heart finds rest only in God,
from whom comes my salvation.
God is my rock and my safety,
my defense; I stand firm.”**

Every day the voice of God is different - sometimes challenging, sometimes bringing peace and comfort when one feels disappointed or needing strength. As well, our prayer stretches our hearts so that the pain of others becomes our pain. So know, dear ones, that you are remembered and prayed for several times a day with gratitude in our hearts.

May the peace of the Risen Christ enfold you.

Remembered With Love



Sr. Jerome Slugocki died peacefully on January 20, 2007 at St. Benedict's Monastery Health Care Centre. Her gentle and quiet

passing, was symbolic of her well lived life. She was 91 years of age and in her 68th year of monastic profession.

Sr. Jerome was born on October 9,

1915 on the family homestead in Buchanan, Saskatchewan. Her parents Frank and Mary (Lanski) Slugocki emigrated from Poland in 1903. Sr. Jerome was the 7th of 12 surviving children.

Sr. Jerome entered the Benedictine Community in Arborg, Manitoba on October 13, 1936 and made her monastic profession on July 11, 1939. She was a very gentle, compassionate, prayer-filled person who was always ready to be of service. Her cheerful and friendly disposition as well as her sense of order and lead-

ership ability endeared her to all whom she worked with in her many years of ministry.

A Vigil Service was held on Tuesday, January 23, 2007 at 7:00 p.m., at St. Benedict's Monastery Chapel, Winnipeg, presided by Sr. Irene Burzynski, Prioress. The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on Wednesday, January 24, 2007 at 10:00 a.m. presided by Msgr. Louis McCloskey with interment in the Monastery Cemetery.

May she rest in peace. †

Directed Retreats—What are they?

- Sr. Marie Baker, OSB & Sr. Catherine Labinowich, OSB

Are you spinning savoring nothing? Do you find yourself saying, “I am so busy”, or “I feel like I am on a tread mill and can’t get off it?”



Why not come to St. Benedict’s for a retreat?

What is a retreat? A retreat is a time **to:** withdraw, step back, take time apart, get away, find refuge, **from:** routine, work, noise, expectations, responsibilities, family, crowds, the usual, **for:** peace, quiet, silence, space, time, reflection, prayer, solitude, to be loved by God.

Why make a retreat?

We live in such a busy world of expectations, noise and constant invasions by telephone, e-mail, T.V., cell phones, fax machines, that we can easily become only *do-ers* and forget that we are also *be-ings*. We often live at such a fast pace that does havoc not only to our bodies but also our spiritual lives. Often when we have little time for prayer or reflection we find ourselves trying to give from an empty basket.

A day or a few days away, allows us time to rest, pray, reflect, regroup, integrate and see where we need to focus for the next while.

Silence is generally observed during a retreat to allow a person to let go of concerns, to let the Spirit speak, and to be more in touch with God and self.

What kind of retreats are there?

Silent Directed—an individual meets with a qualified director, usually once a day to discuss one’s prayer and relationship with God and life. The directee usually prays three or four times a day with the scriptures.

Centering Prayer Retreat—of different lengths in a group, is led by a facilitator and consists of centering prayer times as well as teachings on video by Thomas Keating and the facilitator.

Guided Retreat—a director gives one or two short talks a day to a group generally with suggested scripture passages and reflection questions.

Preached Retreat—a director gives one or two conferences to a group, besides time for personal prayer each day.

Day of Prayer—generally a facilitator plans an opening ritual, gives some input followed by reflection time, sharing and a closing ritual.

Self Directed Retreat—a person may book a room and direct him or herself with a book, tapes or an outline given by a director beforehand.



How to Plan a Retreat

Call our Retreat and Conference Centre Coordinator at 339-1705 and register for one of the scheduled retreats found in our brochure, or if these times are not suitable for you, you can book a room if available and ask for a director if you wish one.



Words of this hymn summarize the principles of a retreat very well.

“Come and find the quiet centre
in the crowded life we lead,
Find the room for hope to enter,
find the frame where we are freed:
Clear the chaos and the clutter,
clear our eyes that we can see,
All the things that really matter,
be at peace and simply be.”

- source unknown

Comments by retreatants:

“As soon as I turn on to Masters Avenue I begin to slow down and find peace”.

“The quiet, the walks outdoors always refresh me”.

“The scripture passages suggested by the director help me relate to God”.

“The Day of Prayer each month allows me time to stop, reflect and listen to my God”.

“It is like an oasis for spirit and body”.



St. Benedict's Place—One Year Old!

It's hard to believe that St. Benedict's Place has been open for a full year already. There are 8 suites rented with 9 occupants. Marketing continues with many open houses, tours and information sessions still being given, while working toward full occupancy.

Blessing and
Official Opening—
June 10/07

been the opportunity to form new friendships. As each new resident arrives, they are taken under the wings of those who already 'know the ropes'. Now that warmer weather has finally arrived, everyone is looking forward to continuing the fellowship in the fresh air on the patio.

forward to is the **Blessing and Official Opening of St. Benedict's Place on June 10, 2007**. At that time Sr. Irene and invited guests will ask God's blessings on this new facility and officially "give birth" to St. Benedict's Place.

There are still suites available. If you would like more information or would like to book your tour, please call Sr. Denise at 338-4601.

In the midst of all the 'business' of St. Benedict's Place, there has also

The next exciting event that the Sisters and the residents are looking

We're waiting for you!

THE SAINT JOHN'S BIBLE



On the weekend of April 20—22, 2007, Mr. Tim Ternes, Director of Education for *The Saint John's Bible* at St. John's University, Collegeville, MN brought *The Saint John's Bible* Project to St. Benedict's Retreat & Conference Centre. Commissioned by Saint John's Abbey and University and executed by Donald Jackson, Senior Scribe to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth's Crown Office and a collaborative team of scribes and artists, *The Saint John's Bible* is the first illuminated, handwritten Bible of monumental size (24-1/2 x 15-7/8) to be commissioned by a Benedictine Monastery in 500 years.

On Friday, April 20, the day began with a special morning session that

was held for all the clergy and ministers of the Winnipeg church community. The grand opening Procla-



mation of the Word with song and prayer was held Friday evening at 7:30 p.m. The chapel was filled to capacity. The workshops and exhibitions were held all day Saturday and Sunday. Many people were in attendance throughout the weekend to witness this incredible exhibit and hear and see, via DVD, the story of its creation.



Heartfelt thanks to the twenty-four young men from St. Paul's High School who served as Honor Guards throughout the weekend, to all our volunteers and to all who took part in the workshops or who came just to tour the exhibit.

Special thanks to St. Benedict's Foundation Inc. and the Catholic Foundation of Manitoba for their financial assistance to help bring this exhibit to our Centre.

The Saint John's Bible Project will be coming to the Winnipeg Art Gallery April 11—June 8/08. For those of you who were unable to see the exhibit when it was at the Centre, please take it in. It's definitely worth it!



Forever Rejoicing in the Lord



Sister Mary Bernard Davidowich, was born on June 22, 1914 in Wishart, Saskatchewan. The family homestead was located in the postal district of Krasne – meaning ‘beautiful’ in Ukrainian. She was the 5th oldest of 8 children. Her parents John and Michaelina were married in Poland and, like many other Polish immigrants, came to Canada in May 1910 and acquired 160 acres of land offered under the Homestead Act of 1862.

Although education was difficult to come by in those early days, Sister Mary Bernard attended a one room rural school called Touchwood which she thoroughly enjoyed.

Sister Mary Bernard cannot recall any particular reason she was attracted to religious life. She does recall her uncle speaking about her second cousin’s life (Sister Pauline Angielski) at the Motherhouse in Arborg, MB and her cousin’s forthcoming visit home. When Sister Pauline did come, she was accompanied by another member of the Community, Sister Eleanor Grzymalowski. Sister Mary Bernard was very taken with Sister Eleanor and this prompted her to ask her parents for permission to go back to Arborg with the two Sisters. She was only 15 years old at the time.

Her early years of formation included going to school till she completed Gr. XI, helping out with farmwork and taking lunch out to the threshing crew. She says for the most part she enjoyed convent life.

Following her first monastic profession she was sent to Oakes, North Dakota to teach Gr. 1, 2, 3 and to do the cooking. She relates that she was not adept at either task. Sister Mary Bernard recalls that the first year was hard. “But, one can learn anything if one has to. I don’t know how people lived through my cooking that year”.

Following this first year on Mission, Sister Mary Bernard was sent to the convent on Pritchard Avenue in Winnipeg where she did laundry, baked altar breads, taught catechism and kindergarten. This was quickly followed by a year in Sifton, MB where she again was “chief cook”. For the next seven years she was assigned to Sacred Heart Hospital in Russell, MB where she performed a variety of services.

Then in 1943, Sister Mary Bernard’s life long career in nursing began. She obtained her LPN certificate and went on to nurse in Birtle, Gimli and Winnipegosis. In 1970 – 71 she attended the Adult Education Centre in Winnipeg to complete her Gr. XII and proceeded to Misericordia Hospital School of Nursing, graduating as an RN in 1973. Following her graduation she spent twenty years nursing, nine in Winnipegosis and eleven in Russell.

Upon retiring from nursing Sister Mary Bernard dedicated herself to Pastoral Care, visiting the elderly and infirm in Russell and surround-

ing areas, praying with them and bringing them the Eucharist.

In August 2003, at the age of 89, she returned to the Monastery where, due to her health, she took up residence in the Community’s Health Centre.

Sister Mary Bernard has always believed strongly in personal and community prayer. She can regularly be seen sitting in her wheelchair deep in prayer in the Health Care Chapel balcony.

“I find joy in the Lord. Bless the Lord, my soul”. Ps. 104



Experience a week....

*As a potential
Benedictine Sister!*

**If you are a single Catholic woman
treat yourself to a monastic live-in
at St. Benedict’s Monastery,
Winnipeg, MB.**

**From Saturday, June 2nd to
Saturday, June 9, 2007**

*Spend a bit of your summer....
immersed in the monastic rhythm of
prayer and work,
study and leisure...a week
surfacing God’s call deep within
you!*

**There is no cost to you.
Simply contact
Sr. Grace, OSB at (204) 338-4601 or
g_kowalski@hotmail.com.**

Retreat and Conference Centre Activity.....

- Sister Virginia Evard, OSB



In January, the Deacon community gathered for retreat.

Sister José Hobday, a Seneca elder and a Franciscan from Tucson, AZ led the Lenten Retreat with the theme: "Fire in the Belly, Flame around the Heart, Sparks for the Mind." A true wisdom teacher, Sister Jose delighted and inspired participants with her storytelling, her humor—her very presence.



Cantate! 2007



Richard Tyborowski—
Classical Guitarist



African Congregation of Calvary Temple

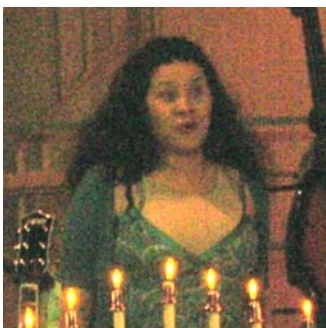
Congratulations to the winners of St. Benedict's Raffle held on May 11, 2007.

1st Prize—Designer Quilt —Gil Bernier

2nd Prize—Patio Set—Shannon Olafson

3rd Prize—BBQ— Helene Proteau

Thank you for your support!



Left:
Heulwen Jones—
Mezzo-soprano



Right:
Nightfall Jazz
Ensemble



Sisters of the Order of St. Benedict

St. Benedict's Monastery

225 Masters Avenue

Winnipeg, MB Canada R4A 2A1

Phone: (204)338-4601 Fax: (204)339-8775

Dear Friends of St. Benedict's,

On August 19th of this year, our Benedictine Community will be commemorating its 95th anniversary of foundation as an independent Benedictine Community of women in the Province of Manitoba. And like Peter, James and John exclaimed on Mount Tabor after Jesus' Transfiguration—we too exclaim—*"It is good for us to be here"* - here, who and where we are in the year 2007 after 95 long years of challenge, growth, change, prayer and service.

However, unlike Peter, James and John we do not propose that we build three tents on the mountain-top, one for Moses, one for Elijah and one for Jesus. Rather we look back over 95 years in deep wonder, amazement and gratitude at the many and varied tents we have been able to build for the glory of God and service of His people. We look back at the many gifts we have re-

ceived; the numerous family members and friends who have companioned us along the way; the financial and personal support that enabled us to extend and

expand services to the wider community; the guidance provided by volunteer Boards and Committees assisting us in times of change and need to move into unknown futures as well as the many unexpected tokens of love and support extended to individual Sisters or the Community as a whole. And so we can exclaim: *"Yes, it is good for us to be here"*.

We invite you to a special kind of celebration of prayer and thanksgiving—in *the privacy of your homes, cottages, place of business or wher-*

ever you find yourself during the weekend of August 19th. Pray for us in your own time and way.

Peace be with you,

Sr. Gerarda Pura, OSB
Executive Director
St. Benedict's Foundation Inc.



Should you wish to acknowledge the Sisters of St. Benedict on their 95th Anniversary, a 'Tribute' donation can be made to St. Benedict's Foundation, 225 Masters Ave, Winnipeg, MB R4A 2A1.

Retreat & Conference Centre.... cont'd



Left: The Sabbath Retreat for Young Adults in Ministry, March 22-25 led by Michael Hryniuk.

Right: The Spiritual Care Dept. of Health Sciences Centre conducted five one day workshops for over 60 employees each to cultivate a mission of hope throughout the hospital.



Memorial Programs

On Sunday, November 26, 2007 the first 'Service of Remembrance' was held in St. Benedict's Monastery Chapel. The Service was created to honor those who have died and have been remembered by loved ones through donations to St. Benedict's Foundation's Memorial Program.

The evening was ribboned with music, candles, scripture readings and reflection. With love and reverence the names of all those who have died since the beginning of the Memorial Program in 1995 were read aloud. As the names were read, the assembly was invited to light a candle in memory of their loved one and place it along side the Book of Life.

Following the service, all enjoyed refreshments and fellowship in the Monastery dining room.

The response to this first event was very positive, so much so in fact, that it was decided it would become an annual event. The next Service of Remembrance will be held Sunday, **November 4, 2007** at 7:00 p.m. The Sisters would be honored to have you as their guests.

We thank all those who attended the service for their loving presence. We will continue to keep you and your loved ones in our prayers.

Taking things one step further, we are happy to announce that a new workshop will be offered by the Retreat & Conference Centre in their next season's programming, to help those who are coping with the loss of a loved one. Please call the Centre in the Fall at 339-1705 for more information.



*Blessed are they
that mourn, for
they shall be
comforted.*
-Matthew 5:4

Note from the Editor

- Deb Bernier



I have been working at St. Ben's for two years now. Over coffee, I listen with the amazement of a child, to the stories the Sisters tell about

working the fields with horses and ploughs in their heavy, black habits or fixing "Magda", the old Model T, tending the sick or feeding and housing the orphans in their care starting from their time in the small community of Arborg, Manitoba and continuing through the years — a group of pioneering women, working the land, being good stewards of what they owned and tending God's lost and lonely lambs, often with little or no pay, relying on the generosity of neighbours and friends to support them in their work.

Many years have gone by since those Arborg days. What I continue to notice though, is that although things have changed, the Sisters continue, to this day, their mission and ministry of hospitality, service to the people of God and stewardship of all God's gifts —again with little or no pay.

As lay people, many of us are fortunate in today's world to have pension plans and insurance policies of all kinds but many of our Sisters have not had the opportunity to take part in such programs. Many do not even have families left to help support them in their retiring years. Who will tend them?

In this, their 95th Anniversary year, we can tend them.

Keeping in the spirit of '95', how

about \$9.50, \$95.00, \$950.00? Your gift (in any amount) will be used to help the Sisters in their time of need.

For the Sisters of St. Benedict, the quote on page 7 of this newsletter rings true — "Yes, it is good for us to be here". As a lay person witnessing their ongoing work of transforming humanity, I think it is good for them to be here too.

We can help—it's our turn to feed the lambs.

Peace.

If you would like to help, please make cheques payable to St. Benedict's Foundation indicating "95th Anniversary" and send to 225 Masters Ave. Winnipeg, MB R4A 2A1. You will receive a tax receipt.



Invitation to Worship

Morning Prayer Mon.-Fri. 7:00 am Sat. 9:00 am Sun. 10:00 am
Midday Prayer Daily 11:50 am
Evening Prayer Daily 5:00 pm

(No Evening Prayer in Chapel on Wednesday)

Eucharist Sunday 11:00 am OR anticipated Sat. 7:00 p.m.
Tues., Wed. & Thurs. 9:00 a.m.

Exposition of Blessed Sacrament with Adoration on Sisters' Retreat
Sunday. Last Sunday of month, 2:00 - 4:00 pm

Times may change. Please phone 338-4601 to check.

Privacy Policy

St. Benedict's Monastery (the "Monastery") and St. Benedict's Foundation, Inc. (the "Foundation") do not sell, trade or share their database information. The Monastery and the Foundation use a reputable mailing firm to prepare mailing labels for their newsletters and brochures.

The Monastery and the Foundation rely on the generosity of their supporters and friends. Supporters and friends always have the right to be removed from our mailing list or be exempt from specific communication from us. Please contact the Monastery or the Foundation or look at our website for more information about these matters.

Upcoming Events

June

1 -3 Retreat for the Unemployed
3 Creating in Clay
22 - 29 Silent Directed Retreat

July

20 - 27 Intensive Centering Prayer Retreat
20 - 27 Advanced Centering Prayer Retreat

August

2 - 9 Post Intensive Centering Prayer Retreat
10 - 13 Contemplative Outreach Visioning Event II

Register by June 15 and Save!

November

9 - 11 The Spirituality of Healing, James Finley

Wish List

◆ A still in good condition Tread Mill

Benedictine Connection is published twice a year by the Sisters of St Benedict, St. Benedict's Monastery, Winnipeg, MB Canada and is distributed free of charge to relatives and friends of the community.

Newsletter Committee: Mrs. Deb Bernier— Editor, Sr. Virginia Evard, Sr. Catherine Labinowich, Sr. Gerarda Pura. Many thanks to all who have contributed to the newsletter in any way.

For the love of the earth, this newsletter is printed on recycled paper without an envelope.

Return undeliverable address blocks to:

Office of Communications and Development
St. Benedict's Monastery
225 Masters Avenue
Winnipeg, MB Canada R4A 2A1

Phone: 204/338-4601
Fax: 204/339-8775
E-mail: stbens@mts.net
Website: www.mts.net/~stbens/

Publications
Mail Agreement
No. 40033353



Please notify us of any change of address
or if you want your name removed from our list.